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RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 0284

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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/02/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [YM](#)  
SUBJECT: SALEH ADMITTED TO HOSPITAL

Classified By: CDA Angie Bryan for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (U) Shortly after returning from his trip to Spain and Belgium, and only a few months after his regular annual physical in Germany, President Saleh was admitted to a Yemeni hospital.

12. (U) The Defense Ministry-funded 26Sep Net reported on February second that President Saleh had flown from the port city of Mukalla to Sana'a to be admitted to the hospital for "regular medical checkups." The website of the opposition Yemeni Socialist Party reported the same day that Saleh's sudden departure from Mukalla had caused him to miss a "massive wedding" he had been scheduled to attend. The website of the Zaidi-affiliated opposition Popular Forces Party reported on February third that Saleh had initially been admitted to Ibn Sena hospital in Mukalla but had been transferred because of bad conditions there. Yemen TV had reported the previous night that Saleh had allocated a billion Yemeni rials (approximately 5 Million USD) to rehabilitate that hospital.

13. (C) The British DCM told the Charge d'Affaires on February second that a rumor was circulating among British Embassy local staff that President Saleh had suffered a stroke. Parliamentarian and member of the Ruling General People's Congress Nabeel Basha confirmed to Pol/Econ Chief in a February second meeting that the President had been admitted to the hospital for treatment of "a medical condition" and was still in the hospital as of noon that day. Basha was unable to elaborate on the medical condition but mentioned that the President suffers from hypertension. He did not seem overly concerned about the President's condition. Editor of Aden-based independent daily al-Ayyam, and scion of an influential Adeni family Basha Bashraheel called PolOff in the afternoon of February second to ask if the embassy had any information on the health of the president. He told PolOff that his sources had told him that the president was suffering from shortness of breath just before he was admitted to the hospital.

14. (S) President Saleh did not attend publicly announced meetings with the visiting Prime Minister of Pakistan, nor did he travel to Qatar as one DAO source reported he had planned to do. He did, however, according to report on 26Sep Net, meet with Abdulrahman al-Attiya Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council on February third.

Comment  
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15. (C) It is clear that President Saleh has been admitted to the hospital for some sort of treatment, but the type and

severity of the illness being treated is unknown. A man of his age who is hypertensive would be at an increased risk of both stroke and heart disease. On the other hand, he could simply be suffering from a viral or bacterial infection. (Note. Secretary of the President Faris Sanabani, who traveled with Saleh on his recent trip to Europe, has also been reported to be ill. It is possible that the two men were exposed to the same bug while traveling together. End Note.) Aging rulers tend to attract speculation about their health, and Saleh is no exception. His failure to attend the wedding and the meeting with the Pakistani Prime Minister are signs that his sudden illness may be serious. On the other hand, it is very hard to imagine, if he were to have suffered a stroke or other severe illness, that he would take a moment to allocate money for a hospital rehabilitation, unless the donation was intended to distract the public or ensure the discretion of the hospital staff. Post continues to follow the situation as closely as the tight-lipped nature of Saleh's inner circle allows End Comment.

BRYAN